BALLET TODAY

VOL. I. No. 4 JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1947

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO BALLET EVERYWHERE

NEWS FROM PARIS, AMERICA AND RUSSIA

2/-

"The Great Western"

Taking her departure from Bristol for New York, on April 7th, 1838

THIS wooden paddle steamer, a leviathan of 1,340 *tons, was the pioneer of the great Atlantic liners. She was built at Bristol in* 1837, *to the designs of the versatile engineering genius, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, and was the first vessel to carry coal enough to make the entire crossing under steam. Three days before she left Bristol on her maiden voyage, on April 7th,* 1838, *the steamship* "Sirius", *chartered by a rival company, slipped out of Cork. In the race that followed the* "Great Western" *averaged* 8.2 *knots, with a best day's steaming of* 243 *miles, and made the crossing in* 15 *days,* 10 *hours, berthing at New York only four hours after the* "Sirius", *a feat which convinced the most conservative of the advantages of steam.*

Issued by The Imperial Tobacco Company (of Great Britain and Ireland), Ltd. C.C.714

BALLET TODAY

Vol. I. No. 4 January-February, 1947
Editorial Offices - 244 HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON W.C.1
Telephone: Chancery 8471

EDITORIAL COMMENT

EVERY lover of ballet will have sent mental if not actual congratulations to Miss Ninette de Valois on the occasion of her appearance in the New Year's Honours List. Many of us feel that such a recognition should have come to her long ago, but it is none the less welcome because belated.

The "big news" of the moment is the imminent production of two of Massine's ballets at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. *Le Tricorne* is due on February 6th, and *La Boutique Fantasque* will follow on the 27th. At the time of writing the latter has not been cast, though Massine will, of course, be appearing as the male Can-Can dancer. Present indications are that he will be dancing with the Company for at least three months, after which he will produce an entirely new ballet which will not, however, be ready until the autumn. There are no details yet regarding this, but the rumours which have been flying around about *Le Beau Danube* and *Capriccio Espagnole* both being on the *tapis*, are without any foundation. The cast for *Le Tricorne* is as follows:—The Miller's Wife, Margot Fonteyn (second cast, Violetta Prokhorova); The Governor, John Hart (Stanley Hall); Petit Maître, Alexander Grant (Franklin White). The *Jota* will be led by Beryl Grey and Moira Shearer. As understudy to Massine as The Miller, Michael Somes has just about the toughest assignment ever undertaken by any English dancer. I can think of only one other almost as difficult—that of understudying Massine in *La Boutique Fantasque*.

With the production of these two ballets Sadler's Wells Ballet face their biggest challenge. This Company pioneered the return of the full-length classical ballet and for years have had this field almost entirely to themselves. What happened is, in effect, that these ballets became English versions, admirably done in a way that their choreographers might conceivably have barely recognised. This has never been a serious drawback with audiences who have learnt about classical ballet only through watching Sadler's Wells. Apart from the classics, Sadler's Wells have never borrowed further from the Russian repertoire than early Fokine, and their *Les Sylphides*, when carefully cast, is at least as good as most other productions seen here for many years, and if their *Carnaval* is unsatisfactory, so was that of the de Basil Ballets Russes. Now they are deliberately inviting comparison by presenting two favourite ballets which a great many balletomanes still vividly remember. They will be expected to re-create memories, not substitute something of their own. The measure of their success will undoubtedly play a tremendous part in the future of this Company. There are encouraging signs that they are fully aware of all this, and February 6th may well prove to be a landmark in the history of English Ballet.

Now for a Cinderella story which is still seasonal. On Christmas Day one of our leading ballet photographers happened to be at the Waterloo Road Hostel for mothers and children rendered homeless by the housing shortage. There he found Yolande, eight-year-old redhead. Like so many other little girls she said it was her wish to become a ballet dancer. Next afternoon she found herself in a box at the Royal Opera House watching her first ballet, a performance of *Swan Lake*. In the interval Yolande was introduced to Miss de Valois, who admired her natural grace and is going to help her fulfil her Christmas wish; for Yolande is starting classes at the Sadler's Wells School this term. On page 20 we print her story just as she wrote it.

1947 has opened in a blizzard of rumours of more and yet more new companies. What this country needs is not more but better Ballet. P.W.M.

MUSIC TODAY

FROM our recent questionnaire circulated amongst readers of **Ballet Today** it has emerged that some ninety per cent. favour books on music. This was no surprise to us and it only needed the affirmation of this overwhelming response to our enquiry to set the editorial wheels moving on the production of **MUSIC TODAY.**

The first issue is scheduled to appear in March and the price will be two shillings per copy, or a 10s. 6d. subscription for a minimum of five copies. We strongly advise all those who are interested to place an order with their newsagents or booksellers, as, owing to paper restrictions, the edition will, of necessity, be limited.

It will be in size and format a companion magazine to **Ballet Today,** with the same high standard of illustrations and authoritative writing. Every aspect of our musical life will be covered, special articles being devoted to music of the Concert Hall, Opera, Ballet, Theatre and Radio, together with informative reviews of gramophone records and books of interest to music lovers.

TEN BALLETS OF 1946

ONE MAN'S CHOICE

By LIONEL BRADLEY

THINKING over the past year, I have been trying to decide what were my most memorable balletic experiences. I felt that my choice should be concerned with ballets that were entirely new to me or presented in new productions, rather than remembered and expected joys. To the ten ballets given below I could easily have added two or three more productions of Ballet Theatre which gave me great pleasure, and one or two apiece that belong to the companies that bear the names of Monte Carlo and Champs-Elysées. But I wished to select only those that were specially memorable and ruled them out. The other exclusions are deliberate. For however excellent the Aurora, *The Sleeping Beauty* loses half its effect if so much of the other dancing is inadequate, and however well *Giselle* and *Coppélia* may be danced, they can be killed by over-lavish and inharmonious décor, as well as by deficiencies of production and characterisation. Here, then, is my list of ten. I wonder how many ballet lovers will agree with my choice! (The order is alphabetical.)

CHOTA ROUSTAVELI (Choreography, Serge Lifar. Music, Honegger, Harsanyi and Tcherepnine. Décor, Shervachidze and Nepokoichitsky).—Presented by Nouveau Ballet de Monte Carlo. The first new full-length ballet that we have seen for many years. Though choreography, music and décor were somewhat mixed in quality, there was some really lovely dancing for Chauviré and Charrat, a strong role for Olga Adabache, Lifar himself showing glimpses of the virtues that once made him *Le dieu de la Danse*, and some really exciting and virile dancing for Trailine, Algaroff and Kalioujny (who in *Shéhérazade* and *Prince Igor*, despite the cramping conditions, had revived our faith in Fokine's choreographic genius). The theme and treatment had much of interest and deserved a better press. If it had been given at intervals instead of being confined to a single week of the season, it would surely have gained public approval also.

FANCY FREE (Choreography, Robbins. Music, Bernstein. Décor, Smith and Love).—Presented by Ballet Theatre, with Robbins, Kidd, Kriza and their successors. One hundred per cent. American and, whatever anyone says, one hundred per cent. dancing. The most joyous and exhilarating memory of the year. A ballet which did not stale with repetition and triumphantly survived all changes of cast, in a company half of whose men have a standard of technique reached only by a few of our best.

LES FORAINS (Choreography, Petit. Music, Sauguet. Décor, Berard).—Presented by Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées. Slight in theme and treatment, economical in its means, yet possessing that quality of artistic integrity and unity which belongs to the French nation. Perhaps not a masterpiece, but a completely satisfying work of art. Brilliant dancing combined with a pathos which has all the virtue of restraint.

GISELLE (Choreography, Coralli and Perrot. Music, Adam. Décor, Stevenson).—Presented by Ballet Rambert at Sadler's Wells and Hammersmith, with Sally Gilmour, Gerard Mulys or Walter Gore and Joyce Graeme. Other productions of this centenarian ballet may have been more lavish or have shown a greater virtuosity of technique; none, in living memory, has surpassed this in capturing so completely the feeling and atmosphere of the Romantic Ballet, or in so nice an attention to all the details of production. Few dancers could hope to equal Sally Gilmour's success in portraying the character of the heroine in all its aspects, and she has been supported by a really notable pair of Albrechts and a Queen of the Wilis who is both commanding and other-worldly. As I have been accused of undue partiality for this company, I am pleased that my enthusiasm for this production is confirmed by the praises of two of our most experienced ballet-goers, Mr. Beaumont and Mrs. Leeper, whose memories of Russian Ballet go back eight or nine years further than my own. I remain unrepentant in my view that this is an ideal revival of a classic.

JEU DE CARTES (Choreography, Charrat. Music, Stravinsky. Décor, Pierre Roy).—Presented by Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées. Not an exact rendering of Stravinsky's theme, and puzzling to those who do not play Poker. But even if the music, the décor and the exciting choreography had afforded less satisfaction than they did, this ballet would have been memorable as giving us our first sight of Jean Babilée.

KHADRA (Choreography, Celia Franca. Music, Sibelius. Décor, Honor Frost).—Presented by Sadler's Wells Opera Ballet, with Anne Heaton, Sheilah O'Reilly and Leo Kersley. It is a rare experience for a stage picture to take away the breath of an audience by its brilliance, and rarer still for such a riot of colour as this to be so harmonious and artistic. The performance has great charm, the choreography, if uneven, has movements of entrancing loveliness. But it is the richness and beauty of the whole that tears my heartstrings.

MARDI GRAS (Choreography, Howard. Music, Salzedo. Décor and Theme, Stevenson).—Presented by Sadler's Wells Opera Ballet, with Anne Heaton, Nadia Nerina, Donald Britton, John Cranko and Leo Kersley. The most original production of the year in theme and treatment. Stevenson's designs are not only beautiful and fantastic, but also have an element of menace and horror. The music is distinguished and a real support to the movement and atmosphere. The choreography, after slight revision, shows a fluidity and invention beyond anything else Miss Howard has given us. The ballet is not meant to charm, but in its sense of evil and doom it has an inescapable fascination. This young company shows an *élan* and enthusiasm, comparable to its French counterpart, which puts to shame the sometimes languid performances of its seniors.

MR. PUNCH (Choreography, Gore. Music, Oldham. Décor, Wilson).—Presented by Ballet Rambert. A real English masterpiece, if not universal in its appeal. Repeated performances show the debt it owes to its bright and attractive music and décor, but its main success is due to Gore's development of the theme and the wealth and inventiveness of the characterisation. And his own portrayal of Punch is one of the most subtle character studies in modern ballet. The whole cast deserves mention, but they would agree in yielding the palm to their leader.

PILLAR OF FIRE (Choreography, Tudor. Music, Schoenberg. Décor, Mielziner).—Presented by Ballet Theatre, with Chase, Kaye, Vaslavina, Laing and Tudor. The best of Tudor's new ballets, though *Romeo and Juliet* has a rare beauty and *Undertow* many passages of power and fascination. Those who have decried Tudor's choreographic genius are surely silenced now. Nora Kaye here surpassed herself in intensity of feeling and expressiveness, the two sisters were nicely contrasted, Laing had a typical role and Tudor asserted his personality with a minimum of effort. If Ballet may essay psychological themes (and why not?), this is an outstanding success in that genre.

SYMPHONIC VARIATIONS (Choreography, Ashton. Music, Franck. Décor, Fedorovitch).—Presented by Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden, with Fonteyn, May, Shearer, Somes, Danton, Shaw and their successors. Pure dancing, pure beauty and a perfect realisation of the music in physical movement. Our greatest choreographer and the distinguished designer who for twenty years has served him so well have never surpassed this work, in a simplicity which is wholly satisfying. This remains the most beautiful memory of the year.

Editor's Note.—Mr. Bradley has supplied me with an opportunity of indulging in what is one of my minor pleasures of life—making a list. I imagine that almost all ballet lovers are constantly making lists (even if only mental) of favourite ballets, favourite dancers, favourite moments, favourite anything you like connected with Ballet, so I hope you will enjoy yourselves as much as I have in compiling my own which I append, with comments.

Five of my ballets are on Mr. Bradley's list for very much the same reasons:—*Symphonic Variations*, *Fancy Free*, *Les Forains*, *Jeu de Cartes* and Ballet Rambert's *Giselle*. Of Tudor's ballets I choose *Romeo and Juliet* rather than *Pillar of Fire* because I imposed on myself the condition that each choice should be revelationary in some way—the thrill of *unexpected* pleasure should be there. I had heard so much about *Pillar of Fire* that on the first night it already seemed familiar, it was almost exactly as I had pictured it, whereas *Romeo and Juliet* breathed Shakespeare's Verona with a (to me) miraculous beauty, and overset my previous conviction that Shakespeare could not, and should not, be translated into ballet. It is by no means a perfect work and still wears an air of incompletion, but this, with *Symphonic Variations* and *Les Forains*, were the three new ballets which in 1946 swept me off a pair of feet which after twenty or so years of ballet-going are pretty solidly planted as a general rule. Out of the New Monte Carlo Ballet I would only wish to salvage *Dramma per Musica* for its décor by Cassandre and for Yvette Chauviré, the fifteen odd minutes of enjoyment in *Chota Roustaveli* being insufficient compensation to me for the two-and-a-half hours of agonising boredom. I do not share Mr. Bradley's enthusiasm for *Khadra*, several visits to *Mr. Punch* reveal that it is not a ballet for which I am always in the mood, and I have reluctantly to dispense with *Mardi Gras* which I greatly admire, because of my "*unexpected*" clause. Given Andrée Howard as choreographer, Hugh Stevenson as designer and scenarist, and with memories of their previous work, *Mardi Gras* is the logical outcome of their collaboration. I find that *Interplay* persistently haunts me for its ingenuity and peculiarly American charm, and *Apollo* goes in without any question because it proved that memories going back eighteen years are not necessarily to be mistrusted and that Balanchine, with a work which was first seen in 1928, is still the most modern of our choreographers, though, alas, he is even further above the heads of audiences today than he was when *Apollo* was new.

I have tried to find another ballet to make up my list to Mr. Bradley's ten, but although I have enjoyed much else during the year I cannot honestly say that any others fill my particular requirements. I would dearly like to cheat a little and sneak in Babilée's *Blue Bird* and the Alonso-Eglevsky *Casse Noisette pas de deux* and variations purely on dance value, but have perhaps cheated quite enough in even mentioning them. Having gone thus far, however, I will come

(*Continued on page 7*)

SADLER'S WELLS OPERA-BALLET

WITH *Mardi Gras*, which had its first night on November 26th, 1946, the Opera-Ballet makes its first valuable contribution to English Ballet. When *Le Festin de l'Araignée* proved a failure, there were some who deduced from this that Andrée Howard was not happy on a large stage or handling a *corps de ballet*. *Assembly Ball* went some way to disproving this, but is not an important work. Now comes *Mardi Gras*, which is her best ballet to date. She is fortunate in her collaborator, Hugh Stevenson, who provided not only the décor but the idea, which springs from the closing line of Shakespeare's Sonnet No. 50, "My grief lies onward, and my joy behind". This quotation appears on the drop curtain, which is indescribably melancholy in its effect, though superficially all it represents is a pierrot accompanying his own song with a guitar while a columbine sits at his feet. That is the power of this ballet: its suggestion of all-pervading sorrow and foreboding without any tangible reason.

In its development Andrée Howard and Hugh Stevenson owe something to Hans Kafka; those who know his writing will instantly recognise the same feeling of human beings caught up in some strange fate which they cannot understand, for which there is no explanation, but from which they cannot escape. Ostensibly the ballet is concerned with a young girl who is swept away in the wild revels of a carnival and who finds herself confronted by a series of apparitions. But that is only scratching at the surface; the carnival is the symbol of the girl's life, and the terror lies in her own mind. In the midst of her agonising fears there comes an occasional lifting of the horrors and glimpses of happier things, but she is doomed and knows it.

All this is conveyed with the utmost subtlety. There are a few obscurities due to a certain vagueness in identifying characters (for example, there are three girls who would seem to be the remembrance of past happiness, but whose harsh blue tutus and page-boy bobs give them more the air of a "sister act"), and although it has been slightly cut since the first night, it is still a little over-long for a work which relies so much on a cumulative effect of nightmare frustration. These, however, are minor and remediable blemishes.

The carnival figures are a triumph of sinister imagination—grotesque and utterly without merriment for all their cavortings. There is a quite skin-prickling moment when one of the revellers, her face flattened by a yellow mask, sidles past the frightened girl twitching her fan, her whole body seeming to leer.

Occasionally one has a feeling that the company is being tried too high. *Mardi Gras* is an extremely adult work, and Andrée Howard has made no concessions. This is particularly noticeable in the part of the Negro Pugilist, who should be a figure of pride and grandeur, who looms in the girl's eyes as a giant who is always there wherever she may turn. John Cranko evidently knows what is needed (and that in itself is a great deal) without quite having either the physique or technical skill required. On the whole, however, the performance is worthy of the ballet. Anne Heaton has a rapt pathos as the girl, and Nadia Nerina as a circus dancer stepped out of her booth and took the stage with all the assurance of an established ballerina. (South Africa is going to be very proud of its Nadine Judd.) Both Donald Britton and Leo Kersley do well in other leading parts.

Leonard Salzedo's score helps the ballet to make every point. It is virile, interesting and always balletic.

Since the ambitious young are seldom discouraged by the strictures of their elders, Mr. Anthony Burke is not likely to be unduly depressed by the almost universal lack of enthusiasm for his first publicly-presented ballet, *The Vagabonds*, presented on October 29th, 1946. Nor need he be; by the time he has arranged six more ballets (and he might well do it in less), he will have purged his brain of every idiom of all the choreographers whose works he has seen, and will then be able to give us a ballet which has his own signature upon it. As it is, one watches *The Vagabonds* in that dreamlike mood of having seen it all fragmentarily before.

Its chief fault is its pretentiousness allied to an insufficient choreographic vocabulary. Mr. Burke's method of indicating any emotion is to have his dancers stretch out their arms. This they all do without cessation from the moment the curtain rises on a yearning foursome of gipsies dragging about the moors in such a high state of passion for one another that one wonders why things have not come to a head long ago. As the curtain finally descends, Alan Carter, now a spirit, is seen walking off into the empyrean with arm upraised, while June Brae trails along in the rear with *her* arms, by way of novelty, extended behind her. In between, Leo Kersley (one of the foursome) has coveted June Brae, for which reason he has been strangled by Mr. Carter, offering excellent opportunity for more arm work on the part of each, wherefor Mr. Carter is hanged by the rest of the gipsy band (everyone's arms outstretched at once). I could not help wondering why, since his colleagues took such a severe view of

Photograph by Edward Mandinian
ANNE HEATON AND DONALD BRITTON IN "MARDI GRAS"

Mr. Carter's conduct, they did not pull him off Mr. Kersley before the worst occurred, though in all fairness I must add that the scene of retribution is the best thing in the ballet.

Everything that could be done in the way of dirty faces and tousled hair to convince us that this youthful company were truly of the raggle-taggle persuasion was duly done; but never did ballet less call for the use of points. Everyone served the choreographer most nobly, and if he will be content to aim a little lower next time he will in all probability hit the target, but it must be his target, not that of half a dozen other people. He might make a start by tying his dancers' hands to their sides.

John Ireland's fine music ("Mai Dun" and the Threnody from his "Concertino Pastorale") did not bear any particular relation to the stage events which are based on Thomas Hardy's poem "A Tramp Woman's Tragedy", but Vivienne Kernot's décor is completely successful in suggesting a bleak, angry landscape where such sombre doings might credibly take place.

I should not like to risk a guess at Alan Carter's future possibilities as a choreographer on the strength of the slight "fishing" ballet which he has devised to Béla Bartok's Roumanian Dances. This is called *The Catch* and is danced with considerable spirit by himself, Joan Harris and Frank Ward. It was greeted with rapturous applause by an audience who subsequently grew hysterical over the worst performance of *Façade* I have ever seen.

The Haunted Ballroom was revived on January 7th with June Brae in the part originally danced by Markova and with Alan Carter in Robert Helpmann's old part of the Master of Treginnis. There is to be a new Celia Franca ballet on February 4th, again with a décor by Honor Frost. This is a Spanish divertissement to the ballet music from Massenet's opera *Le Cid*. It is called *Bailemos*, which is Spanish for "Let us Dance", and is arranged for six couples. Celia Franca will dance in it herself as guest artist. Andrée Howard's *La Fête Etrange* is due for revival later in the season.

P.W.M.

To a Young Dancer

The writer with his pen may leave behind
A monument to all that he has been,
The garnered treasure of his heart and mind,
The summing up of all that he has seen.
And yet this dancer, bearing every grace,
Each movement lovely as a masterpiece,
All beauty in her form, her mind, her face,
Can leave no monument when life shall cease.
While knowing this, my love is touched with pain,
With tenderness, and passionate desire,
To find some word, some phrase that may enchain
The memories of her divinest fire.
That I, through very loving may confer
One line of immortality on her.

Jasper Howlett.

(*Continued from page 5*)

right out into the open and make up my list by writing in, very firmly, the *Don Quixote* excerpts danced by Alicia Alonso and John Kriza. This was arranged by Oboukhoff from the original Petipa and proved wholly delightful. Never having heard a note by Minkus, but having been brought up, like everyone else, in the belief that he composed frightful hack rubbish for the old classical ballets, I was all the more enraptured to find that he wrote the most deliciously rumty-tumty stuff in the world (admittedly three hours of him might be two hours and forty minutes too much). And cheating now without any apology, I bracket this with the Fonteyn-Somes *pas de deux* from *The Fairy Queen* because it is Ashton's genius for the *pas de deux* at its most exquisite.

A LETTER FROM PARIS

By HANS WILD

AFTER missing the two English seasons of the Ballets des Champs-Elysées, I am delighted to be seeing them for the first time in their home theatre, where they have the advantages of a stage with which they are thoroughly familiar, and an orchestra infinitely better than one usually hears accompanying ballet. I was slightly afraid of an anti-climax after the immense amount of praise they had received, but although the first night was by no means one of their best, I knew immediately the thrill of an intelligent and enthusiastic company, with a repertoire peculiarly its own, as French as Ballet Theatre is American, or as the Wells is British, and most successful when most French.

Since then I have seen almost all their productions (*Coppélia* cannot be given, because it belongs to the Opera), including the brief and gay *Le Bal des Blanchisseuses*, the deeply moving *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort*, and a rehearsal of their first two-act ballet, the romantic *La Sylphide*.

Le Bal des Blanchisseuses is a lively piece of nonsense, with a witty score by Vernon Duke (Dukelsky of *Jardin Public*), and an amusing but slightly fussy set and costumes by the young Italian, Stanislas Lepri, who is settling here. Although the costumes are exactly right for the cheerfully besotted washerwomen, they have a tendency to obscure the movement, but that of Danièle Darmance is delightful. After a short overture, slightly reminiscent of *Fancy Free*, the curtain rises on a set full of clothes-lines, hung with everything from sheets to bra's. A Pied Piper clarinetist plays a most wonderful on-stage Blues, whilst Petit, as the butcher's boy, encourages the women to leave work and dance. After this introduction, the musician leaves, and Darmance appears to start an extremely acrobatic *pas de deux* with Petit, whilst the other washerwomen prance around in a flurry of petticoats. As you can imagine, theirs is a tough job, so the boys are called in to play the older, work-hardened harridans. The curtain falls quickly, as Darmance does some wonderful back rolls over Petit, long before any boredom can creep in, and the last few minutes have to be repeated after yells for an encore. Darmance is a lively and beautiful youngster, fresh from triumphs as a skating champion and acrobatics in a music-hall—she has been trained by Petit and Gordon Hamilton, and can now do an elegant *arabesque* as easily as a back flip.

The Company is enlarging, too, for *La Sylphide*, with ten new girls in the corps; Solange Schwarz has returned, Alexandre Kalioujny has joined and Alexis Rassine has been appearing as a guest artist. To replace Juanito Garcia in *Los Caprichos*, and to dance in a new work, Ravel's *Alborado del Grazioso*, Juan Granero has signed. This is a short ballet, with choreography by Ana Nevada, and décor by Clavé, who has just had a tremendous success with an exhibition of his paintings.

La Sylphide will be a faithful revival of the original ballet by Filippo Taglioni, which has not been danced since 1860. Serebriakoff has designed a replica of the sets based on old lithographs; the Schneitzhoeffer music, discreetly re-orchestrated, will be used (it is even more umpty-tumpty than *Giselle*, but so right, and a pleasant contrast to the modern scores); and the Bérard costumes keep strictly to the Romantic style, with just that slight extra *chic* which will ensure their success.

Petit has arranged the choreography after that of Filippo Taglioni, and has based his work on a detailed contemporary description of the dances to each section of the music. He had the idea of the ballet's revival during the company's stay in Scotland.

The parts of La Sylphide, and Effie, the jilted bride, will be alternated by Nina Vyroubova and Irène Skorik; Roland Petit will be James, the young Scot; Jean Blanchard his friend Gurn; and Gordon Hamilton, Madge, the witch. His appearance down the chimney, the flying ballet, and the general air of Romance all justify it being called a Ballet Pantomime, I think!

The starkness of *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort* is at the other end of the scale, and this is one of the most moving ballets I know. Jean Babilée as the young man, desperately existing in the squalid loneliness of his studio, kicked, insulted and spurned by the girl he loves, is quite frightening; and at the climax of their antagonism, when he hangs himself and the studio walls vanish, leaving him on a gallows formed by the studio beams, the theatre is filled with an icy feeling of Death, who, as the young girl, leads him away over the roofs of Paris.

The Bach Passacaglia which accompanies this work has a matching grandness and austerity, an awesome inevitability, and the result is one of the few successful marriages of superbly self-sufficient music with modern choreography. Cocteau's preoccupation with the elasticity of Time shows itself again, as it does in his films, and there is a wonderful series of slow motion back somersaults when the girl, Nathalie Philippart,

o-Lipnitski

NATHALIE PHILIPPART AND JEAN BABILÉE IN "LE JEUNE HOMME ET LA MORT"

Photo-Lipnitski

DANIÈLE DARMANCE AND ROLAND PETIT IN "LE BAL DES BLANCHISSEUSES"

kicks Babilée as he sits at her feet, and he rolls slowly backwards, over on to his head, remains suspended, then gradually collapses, extending the moment of his horror as it would be felt in the mind of the agonised lover.

The setting, an oppressive and apparently solid studio, which vanishes quickly into the flies as death comes to the hanged youth, leaving the rooftops of Paris and the impersonal flashing of the Eiffel Tower's Citroen sign, is a tricky piece of stagecraft, and one hopes that if the company's present plans for a short London season in the near future *do* materialise, they will have a first-class theatre, where the ballets can be mounted as carefully as they are in the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées. This visit is still in the rumour stage, and unless they appear before the American tour, London will not see the company again before 1948. Apart from all this, there is always the Opera Ballet, but one visit was more than enough, and I'll wait until Balanchine has swept away some of the dead wood before anyone will drag me there again, although one does get a glimpse of Edwardian days at the old Leicester Square Empire!

A young woman, Janine Solange, and her "mistresses of the dance", freewheels her way through Beethoven's symphonies, but a smaller group of youngsters, calling themselves the Ballets des Arts, gave two successful programmes at the Marigny Theatre, and will deserve more serious attention when they can give regular performances.

Apart from the ballet, there is a fair amount of good music to be heard here, and the programmes do not invariably include one of the weekend concertos. Art exhibitions are everywhere, but most of them impress one by showing what an enormous influence Picasso and Matisse have had upon the younger men. The theatre is very much alive, with Jean-Louis Barrault giving a very French version of Hamlet, using the excellent new Gide translation, also the beautiful mime play *Baptiste*, which was shown, in part, in the film *Les Enfants du Paradis*. The new Parisian prudery, which closed all the licensed brothels quite recently, baulks at the word prostitute, and Sartre's new play is billed everywhere as *La——— Respectueuse*. Existentialism seems on the way out. Paris is reasonably pleasant, and I wish you could come over and see the ballet, just to tell me whether it is true that Petit, Babilée, and the company as a whole are dancing better than ever.

The Edward Mandinian photograph on the cover shows the final scene of "The Fairy Queen" at Covent Garden.

AUTOGRAPH

A Ballet in One Act; Book by Patience Watchett after the short story "Flüchtige Verehrung" ("Brief Worship") by Maria Grünbaum; Music by Gordon Llewellyn; Scenery by John Burden; Costumes by Lydia Sumatokhavskaya; Choreography by Frank Grafton.

(This extract from "Further Modern Ballets" by K. W. Birmingham is reprinted here by kind permission of Messrs. Feathering & Wiseman. Decorations specially drawn for "Ballet Today" by Joan Hyde.)

THE curtain rises on a typical back-street near some well-known theatre. In the background stands the Stage-Door around which is arranged a group of admirers, the inner line grim, the second line eager, flutterers still arriving. Grouped about the pavement are some spectators including an Old Hand full of explanations. Little girls with pigtails jump about excitedly, and one is already wedged in the inmost circle. The sense of delightful anticipation is enhanced by the Doorkeeper's occasional appearances.

At a sign of "Somebody's coming out!", two usherettes emerge briskly. After due inspection, heads are shaken and the lines hold firm. A Puzzled Young Man approaches them timidly, but is waved back scornfully by the Old Hand. Again the doors open and three members of the orchestra struggle forth much encumbered by their instruments. The Doorkeeper looks out and grins: "It's only me!".

Someone is now recognised in the distance escaping by another door. Flutterers run off waving programmes, but the inner lines remain firm, only turning heads to watch events. A triumphant little group returns and dances a lively *pas de quatre*. Others struggle back sadly, shrugging shoulders. A *second sujet* next encounters the general scrutiny. He hesitates, but no one cares, so he disappears slowly. The Doorkeeper pops out importantly amid tremendous excitement. Emerge four irate cloakroom attendants, struggling, grimacing and waving umbrellas. They win through at last and depart with imprecations.

Now appear two female *premiers sujets*, who execute a little signature dance, while those around dart forward in turn and then prance with satisfaction. The *pas de deux* begins with *bourrées*, both making bold signatures with a flourish on books to right and left as they move through the crowd. Separated and surrounded by groups *en chartron*, they elaborate their signatures with *ronds de jambe en l'air*. Endeavouring now to take their leave, they perform several *coupés* and *pas de chat*, treading on bystanders' toes and apologising. Each then does *bourrées* backwards to centre where they collide, turn and exchange a look. Returning to *bourrées aux signatures* they sign first outwards, then turn inwards to where the Puzzled Young Man holds a postcard in between them. Both sign simultaneously, turn and run off lightly to each side, leaving him stupefied. Real pens are not commonly used in this ballet, their place being taken by the index finger, but the actions of receiving and returning pens are carefully simulated. In the last piece of business described, the card is signed with pens borrowed from each side. During the ensuing confusion five little girls attain the inner line, but one is still left outside the magic circle, performing a sad little *valse* step. The Old Hand endeavours to console her.

Now emerges the Director, soon lost to view beneath waving cards and programmes. Suddenly she sweeps the ranks to each side and stands forth with finger raised indicating that she will sign *one* more. Looking round, she beckons to the Pathetic Little

Girl, who approaches reverently. The Director signs and departs determinedly. A triumphant *Schottische* is then danced by the Pathetic Little Girl.

Rival groups are seemingly discussing favourite *premiers* and principals. Characteristic gestures and sketches of steps encounter gestures of *schwärmerei* or disgust. The Maestro strides forth attended by *coryphées*, and a young *premier sujet* is seen performing a number of elaborate signatures each followed by a *gargouillade* as he approaches the next supplicant. At length he goes off with friends who have been waiting. The crowd is now becoming impatient, recalling nights when "they didn't sign" or left by another door. Some proudly display their "*gargouillades*" and the Puzzled Young Man holds a postcard before him, turning it round and round with a worried expression. The ranks close in and the atmosphere grows tense, assisted by the Doorkeeper.

Follows a drum-roll and fanfare. The doors fly open and the two Principals stand revealed on the step. The crowd below is tense with emotion. Swaying in mounting hysteria, it flings up its arms, stamps and twists ecstatically, then falls on its knees, beats its breast and bangs its head on the pavement. During this display, the Premier Danseur often looks rather weary, inspecting his watch or pulling out his braces—some dancers have a particular fondness for these threadbare methods, but the role is performed in many different ways. The Ballerina appears demure and collected. Bowing graciously, she hands her bouquet to the Doorkeeper, then rises on the point *en attitude* indicating that she is ready to present the first talisman. She signs, supported by the Premier Danseur, then *grand rond de jambe*, another signature, *pirouette en attitude* and so through an *adage* interspersed with signatures and ending with the finale to a famous composition in the classical repertory, during which she makes two signatures at once with a pen in each hand.

Her partner now lifts her over the crowd and sets her down apparently free, but she is immediately encircled. He lifts her to the opposite side with like result. The crowd grows fierce and the partners are divided. The Premier Danseur is attacked from all sides, delivering signatures between *soubresauts* and *entrechats* in a desperate effort to escape, finally executing frantic *doubles tours*, to no avail. He then adopts threatening attitudes, even looking as though he might burst into song, but the crowd remains undaunted. He grips his throat and gropes for air—then flops about pathetically. They hold him up. He brightens into a light *allegro*, nods and smiles to every side and wriggles swiftly through the unwary throng, leaving a trail of startled amazement as, blowing a shower of kisses, he passes out of view with a *grand jeté*.

Meanwhile there has been a diversion. The Ballerina waves to the Doorkeeper and signals "one". He begins passing her bouquet over the crowd, but she mimes "wash-out" and then "one" again. The Doorkeeper tosses a white flower from the bouquet and the toss is echoed neatly by the Danseur's last *jeté*. The Ballerina counts the petals—six! Six little girls troop forward, each making a careful *révérence* before and after collecting her signed programme. Last comes the Pathetic One. Alas! her pen has run out. The Ballerina shakes it, executes some *petits battements sur le coup de pied*, shakes it again and shakes her head. The Little Girl dissolves into tears, but the Puzzled Young Man offers his pen and the Ballerina signs graciously. The Pathetic Little Girl makes a deep *révérence* and the six Little Girls then repeat the *Schottische*. The Ballerina reclaims her bouquet, takes a rose, kisses it and gives it to the ecstatic Pathetic Little Girl. Another rose is given thus to the Doorkeeper, who kisses it also and bows. She takes his hand and they bow to the company, which applauds wildly. The Ballerina breaks suddenly into a delightful *espagnole*, departing thus to her taxi with many following. With a loud bang the Doorkeeper shuts up for the night. A taxi-horn echoes distantly. The crowd disperses. The Puzzled Young Man and the Pathetic Little Girl repeat her touching little *valse* together. She gives him the Ballerina's rose and then departs with her mother, the Old Hand. In the darkened street the Stage Door remains brooding alone.

A FALSE PROPHECY

By M. MONTAGU-NATHAN

IN a recent issue of *Theatre Today*, that aristocrat among periodicals devoted to the Stage, there appeared two contributions of outstanding interest. One of them was an interview with the veteran Gordon Craig, during which this grand old "man-of-the-Theatre" confessed "with a grin" that certain æsthetic verdicts uttered by him in the past had proved somewhat fallacious. The other was an article on Ballet in which A. V. Coton declared that "we do not rate the Diaghilev era . . . too highly in acclaiming it an Age of Gold".

This juxtaposition rang a loud bell in the mind of one reader, and he turned to a bookshelf devoted to a collection of issues of that once-famous journal *The Mask*, which was published under the auspices of Gordon Craig at the Arena Goldoni, Florence. In the October, 1911, number, which refers at length to a banquet given in London to celebrate the return to England of the distinguished exile, there appeared some material which can hardly be described as creditable to so haloed an authority on the Arts.

To one John Balance was entrusted an article with the striking title, "Kleptomania, or the Russian Theatre". After a brief prelude he announces his intention of considering the said institution in general under its three aspects of Drama, Ballet and Opera, but in consideration of the fact that the Russian Ballet was at that moment engaged in visiting certain European capitals he would deal at once with that particular "aspect".

In order adequately to prepare the reader for the most glaring utterances in this astounding essay, a beginning will be made by quoting from Mr. Balance's peroration. "As a work of Art, then, the Russian Ballet is a myth; as a work of originality it is a fraud". We "now return you" to his exordium. "And first what is this Russian Ballet which has lately caught the fancy of the impressionable Frenchman? Well, to begin with, it is nothing new. It is the old French ballet warmed up . . . . They (the Russians) have borrowed an artificiality from a blasé people and have elaborated it".

But, adds Mr. Balance, they have "done one clever thing; they have increased the value of the French Ballet by adding to it a few tricks stolen from other lands and other arts . . . ". So much for Mr. Balance's bird's-eye-view. He then proceeds to an analytical "close-up". "They invited painters of taste to assist them. They knew that some painters . . . are only too delighted to air their knowledge of colour and decoration in the more refined atmosphere of the footlights. It gives them a chance". Evidently no expert with the rapier, Mr. Balance decides to attack M. Bakst with a bludgeon. This artist, it seems, "has a pretty knack of drawing coloured supplements and covers for the illustrated papers . . . ". The costumes he designs "are the old refurbished wardrobe . . . of Sarah Bernhardt . . . ". "On paper his vulgarity . . . beams with a kind of blue glow . . . . On the stage Bakst is not vulgar, he is simply lost . . . he has the misfortune to be an amateur".

M. Benois, believes Mr. Balance, is "even worse . . . he is a serious old rake . . . ". And then, in a summing-up of the products of these two bunglers, he quotes Mr. Craig as having laid it down that "you cannot co-mingle the arts and cry out that you have created a new art . . . ".

Having apparently established to his satisfaction that the Russians are mere triflers with the art of Ballet, our essayist now turns his attention to their terpsichorean hirelings. "Their Dancing" (honoured, it will be observed, with a capital D) "is not original; it is something learned and then made. They create nothing . . . ". As to the part played by Music in this fraudulent "co-mingling", our criticaster disdains to comment. Thus is Russian Ballet weighed by a Balance and found wanting.

In a subsequent number of *The Mask* we discover another contributor, who has flung away immortality by confining his signature to cryptic initials, confessing astonishment at the newly-created Western European vogue for the Russian Ballet. "No new life has been created; an old and dusty wardrobe has been brought up from the cellars of the Paris Opera House and the Russian collectors of curios have indulged their mania . . . and have dressed up living dolls with the cast-off clothes of a dead age . . . . *And that is exactly what the discerning Publics of Europe will very soon be saying*". Interpolated italics were surely never so appropriate.

And what, will be asked, did readers of *The Mask* think of this farrago? Well, perhaps one of its most distinguished readers may be considered worthy of quotation. George Calderon, to whom the first production in England of Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard* was owed, wrote a letter to the Editor expressing the opinion that "this John Balance seems to be a most unbalanced person". He dealt in particular with the allegation of *The Mask* that the Russian Ballet is a feeble imitation of what its promoters had observed in the art of Isadora Duncan. "The Ballet", said Calderon, "has *all* human movements for its sphere, Duncan or no Duncan, and the first man who jumped

(*Continued on page 22*)

THE WINTER SEASON AT COVENT GARDEN

By MARY CLARKE

> "I distinguish the picturesque and the beautiful, and I add to them, in the laying out of grounds, a third and distinct character, which I call *unexpectedness*".
>
> "Pray, sir", said Mr. Milestone, "by what name do you distinguish this character when a person walks round the grounds for the second time?"
>
> Thomas Peacock: *Headlong Hall.*

THAT, in a nutshell, is the question which Frederick Ashton has failed to answer in his new ballet at Covent Garden. *Les Sirènes*, with Beaton costumes and Berners music welded into a balletic whole by Ashton's choreography, *ought* to have been a comic milestone in English ballet. In fact it resembles nothing so enduring.

The first viewing is undeniably the best. Then one is prepared to enjoy the fun and the slapstick, to be entertained by the weirdly contrived entrances of the principals and to listen carefully for the jokes in the music. But the second time brings sad disillusion, and one realises that it was all too easy—there is nothing left for the visionary and aural perceptive powers to fasten upon: no richness of invention in the choreography; no subtlety of characterisation; no costumes of higher import than those created by the fashionable costumiers of 1904.

It is all very professionally contrived, of course, and the company enter into everything wholeheartedly, but their opportunities arise from theatrical properties more often than from the movements contrived for them, and when the audience has seen those properties once it has, to use a vulgarism, had it. A really tightly-knit plot might have saved the ballet, but it is woolly and inconsequential, and, after a promising beginning, jettisons the subsidiary characters (for instance, Countess Kitty and Vavaseur) for the sake of developing the principal roles—of which two (and this may be significant) are non-dancing.

Shrouded in the dim setting, weighed down by the refulgence of the costumes and lulled by the melodious inanities of the music, Homer has this time nodded, but, while *Symphonic Variations* remains, we are unlikely to forget that Ashton is the Homer of English Ballet.

Refulgence, with rather less taste, is the keynote of the re-dressed *Coppélia*, and the two instances in one season are disturbing. A management which spares no expense may be the god of theatrical designers and will attract a certain section of the public *per se*, but other companies have proved that, without vigilant artistic direction, it is often more difficult to decorate a ballet for £5,000 than for £500. The profuseness of decorative detail in these new Sadler's Wells productions is also having a harmful effect upon the dancers who, as yet unaccustomed to the large stage, are further hampered by this flummery. As witness that they *are* capable of taking the stage when imaginatively presented, one again calls upon *Symphonic Variations*.

The reason for the disappointment of William Chappell's second thoughts about *Coppélia* was chiefly that prettiness is not enough when carried to the extent necessary to fill up Covent Garden stage. Chappell has not enlarged by bold, spacious designing, but by multiplication of detail. The method is characterised by the tartan sash which Swanhilda dons for her schottische in Act II—it is now twice as big as the one she wore on other stages.

The ballet seems generally to have suffered a change of heart in the enlargement, and what was once such charming comedy is becoming perilously farcical. Not in all hands, however. Margot Fonteyn knows the permissible limits of humour, and Leslie Edwards, fast developing into one of the company's best character dancers, is a good Dr. Coppelius, suggesting only slight eccentricity and indicating clearly the old scientist's dabblings in necromancy (he deserves special praise for the firm line he took with the Whimsical Walker wig). If Robert Helpmann is insufficiently interested in the role to approach it with any reverence for the classical tradition, one implores him to forgo it altogether: his reputation is now so remarkable that his failures as well as his triumphs are likely to be reflected in English Ballet for generations to come.

The Christmas revival of *Le Lac des Cygnes* was at first marred by under-rehearsal of both company and orchestra. Leslie Hurry has made minor alterations to his costume designs, which are usually improvements, although the enlargement of some numbers (e.g. the use of five instead of previously two couples in the Czardas) seems to have upset the balance of colour. His décor, particularly for the third act, now seems even less suitable than it did on a smaller stage.

There is a good deal of merit in the performance, notably the Swan Queen of Margot Fonteyn. Since she last danced the role, Fonteyn has had considerable experience on the large stage and now takes it with complete, though quiet, authority. The most remarkable features of her dancing, however, are her particularly beautiful arms and the whole lovely carriage and use of the upper part of her body; in

(*Continued on page* 19)

"THE FAIRY QUEEN" at COVENT GARDEN

By ALAN STOREY

TO attempt a criticism of any art it is necessary to establish some precedent or point of reference. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the new revival of *The Fairy Queen*. The yardstick is missing, and even if by chance it were recovered it would have to measure a ghost. To begin with, *The Fairy Queen* is an opera-musicale—the by-product of a theatre in transition. It is essentially an English compromise between the formal court masque, the Elizabethan and Jacobean public theatre, and the Monteverdian conception of opera. Because of its tenuous nature it lacks the formalism of its constituent arts and is incapable of providing its own. Thus the masques are really pseudo-masques; the emergence of recitative and aria is accidental to the theme; and dramatic action is subordinated to spectacle. The compromise certainly satisfied public demand during the period of Purcell's work for the theatre, but its vogue was quickly spent, for, as Addison remarks: "Some that would come to the play hated the musick, and others that were very desirous of the musick would not bear the interruption that so much rehearsall gave".

MARGOT FONTEYN AND MICHAEL SOMES IN "THE FAIRY QUEEN"
Photograph by Edward Mandinian

The Fairy Queen is the first, the longest, and the most lacking in homogeneity of Purcell's four dramatic pieces. As a musical achievement, however, it surpasses its companions. Because of this—and because of the plastic quality in Purcell's music, which cries out for the accompaniment of movement—it was the obvious choice for revival. Indeed, the music and settings are, to me, the real hero and heroine of the Covent Garden production. True, there are arid wastes of conventional writing in the score, but generally it gives a remarkable impression of freshness and inspiration. The influence of the Italian school is marked in such things as the *da capo* aria, "Ye gentle spirits" and the coloratura in "Hark the ech'ing air" with the preceding trumpet ritornello and the subtle use of chromaticism. But we are not long in doubt of Purcell's real nationality when his mastery of Italian style is overridden by a spreading melody such as "Hark, how all things in one sound rejoice".

The main fault of the present adaptation is that it falls between two stools. Mr. Lambert's musical censorship is praiseworthy, but as always in such cases the difficulty lies not only in knowing where to begin, but where to leave off. The purists (particularly those acquainted with the Cambridge revivals) are certain to cavil at many of the omissions—that of the two lovers, Mopsa and Corydon, for instance. If cutting to such streamline dimensions made *The Fairy Queen* more attractive and acceptable to public taste, no doubt it could be justified, but it does not. The piece is still caviare to the general, and my own impression is that its reception is respectful rather than enthusiastic, due to the prevalent intellectual damnation of modern audiences who cannot say they are bored without feeling inferior.

I understand that Mr. Ashton's choreography was but three weeks in the making; if so, he is to be congratulated on the result. Nevertheless, three months' work on it would have been insufficient. Surely to revive is to bring to life something that existed previously? If I am right, Mr. Ashton's choreography—like Titania's Indian Boy—is a changeling snatched from the parent body of modern ballet. I am not condemning his choreography—far from it. In parts it is the most beautiful he has created since *The Wise Virgins*. What I *do* condemn is its presence in *The Fairy Queen*. Ashton is a superb stylist; his facility in creating dance patterns and his grasp of the problems of the ballet-stage are possibly second only to those of Balanchine. If he had been allowed sufficient time I think we should have seen that sense of style applied to the dance-forms of the late seventeenth century; to those used in the original production by Josiah Priest

(*Continued on page* 22)

Photograph by Edward Mandinian

(*Right to left*) BERYL GREY, GILLIAN LYNNE AND MARGARET DALE IN THE ECHO DANCE FROM "THE FAIRY QUEEN"

Photograph by Edward Mandinian

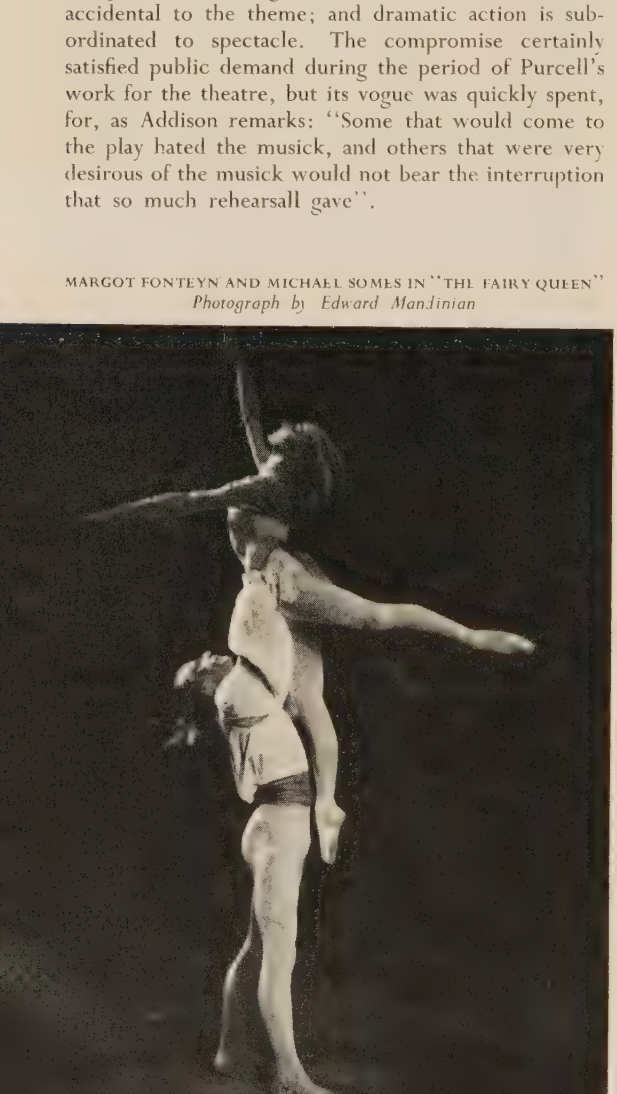
ROBERT HELPMANN AS OBERON AND MARGARET RAWLINGS AS TITANIA IN "THE FAIRY QUEEN"

"THE FAIRY QUEEN" at COVENT GARDEN

By ALAN STOREY

TO attempt a criticism of any art it is necessary to establish some precedent or point of reference. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the new revival of *The Fairy Queen*. The yardstick is missing, and even if by chance it were recovered it would have to measure a ghost. To begin with, *The Fairy Queen* is an opera-musicale—the by-product of a theatre in transition. It is essentially an English compromise between the formal court masque, the Elizabethan and Jacobean public theatre, and the Monteverdian conception of opera. Because of its tenuous nature it lacks the formalism of its constituent arts and is incapable of providing its own. Thus the masques are really pseudo-masques; the emergence of recitative and aria is accidental to the theme; and dramatic action is subordinated to spectacle. The compromise certainly satisfied public demand during the period of Purcell's work for the theatre, but its vogue was quickly spent, for, as Addison remarks: "Some that would come to the play hated the musick, and others that were very desirous of the musick would not bear the interruption that so much rehearsall gave".

MARGOT FONTEYN AND MICHAEL SOMES IN "THE FAIRY QUEEN"
Photograph by Edward Mandinian



The Fairy Queen is the first, the longest, and the most lacking in homogeneity of Purcell's four dramatic pieces. As a musical achievement, however, it surpasses its companions. Because of this—and because of the plastic quality in Purcell's music, which cries out for the accompaniment of movement—it was the obvious choice for revival. Indeed, the music and settings are, to me, the real hero and heroine of the Covent Garden production. True, there are arid wastes of conventional writing in the score, but generally it gives a remarkable impression of freshness and inspiration. The influence of the Italian school is marked in such things as the *da capo* aria, "Ye gentle spirits" and the coloratura in "Hark the ech'ing air" with the preceding trumpet ritornello and the subtle use of chromaticism. But we are not long in doubt of Purcell's real nationality when his mastery of Italian style is overridden by a spreading melody such as "Hark, how all things in one sound rejoice".

The main fault of the present adaptation is that it falls between two stools. Mr. Lambert's musical censorship is praiseworthy, but as always in such cases the difficulty lies not only in knowing where to begin, but where to leave off. The purists (particularly those acquainted with the Cambridge revivals) are certain to cavil at many of the omissions—that of the two lovers, Mopsa and Corydon, for instance. If cutting to such streamline dimensions made *The Fairy Queen* more attractive and acceptable to public taste, no doubt it could be justified, but it does not. The piece is still caviare to the general, and my own impression is that its reception is respectful rather than enthusiastic, due to the prevalent intellectual damnation of modern audiences who cannot say they are bored without feeling inferior.

I understand that Mr. Ashton's choreography was but three weeks in the making; if so, he is to be congratulated on the result. Nevertheless, three months' work on it would have been insufficient. Surely to revive is to bring to life something that existed previously? If I am right, Mr. Ashton's choreography—like Titania's Indian Boy—is a changeling snatched from the parent body of modern ballet. I am not condemning his choreography—far from it. In parts it is the most beautiful he has created since *The Wise Virgins*. What I *do* condemn is its presence in *The Fairy Queen*. Ashton is a superb stylist; his facility in creating dance patterns and his grasp of the problems of the ballet-stage are possibly second only to those of Balanchine. If he had been allowed sufficient time I think we should have seen that sense of style applied to the dance-forms of the late seventeenth century; to those used in the original production by Josiah Priest

(*Continued on page* 22)

Photograph by Edward Mandinian

(*Right to left*) BERYL GREY, GILLIAN LYNNE AND MARGARET DALE IN THE ECHO DANCE FROM "THE FAIRY QUEEN"

Photograph by Edward Mandinian

ROBERT HELPMANN AS OBERON AND MARGARET RAWLINGS AS TITANIA IN "THE FAIRY QUEEN"

BELINDA WRIGHT, JOHN GILPIN AND ANNETTE CHAPPELL IN THE PAS DE TROIS FROM "SWAN LAKE"

Action photographs of Ballet Rambert by Peggy Delius

A SCENE FROM "CONCERTO BURLESCO"

BALLET RAMBERT AT HAMMERSMITH

By MARY CLARKE

BALLET Rambert's season at the King's Theatre, Hammersmith, October 21st to November 30th, included a very beautiful revival of Andrée Howard's *Mermaid*, and the first production of *Concerto Burlesco* (ballet by Walter Gore, costumes by Eve Swinstead-Smith, music by Bartok, orchestrated by Arthur Oldham).

It was gratifying to see Madame Rambert's production of *Giselle* receive the public acclaim it deserves—particularly since such unostentatious and tasteful productions usually go unrewarded. The performances of Sally Gilmour and Walter Gore in this ballet are exquisitely balanced, and it is indeed many years since we saw a better all-round interpretation of Albrecht than that which Walter Gore is now giving. Two other features of the season were Robert Harrold's appearance (on special leave only) in several roles well suited to display his beautiful stage dignity, and the emergence of Belinda Wright as a young Swan Queen greatly to be treasured.

The most constructive criticism that one can offer about *Concerto Burlesco* is that it should be dropped from the repertoire immediately—for the sake of the reputations of all concerned and to preserve the sanity of the dancers. One imagines that the original scenario of Walter Gore's ballet (which, as the title implies, burlesques a concert) was probably brilliantly clever, but it completely failed to establish itself as a ballet or as a piece of theatre.

To begin with, no one in the audience had the faintest notion whether the choreographer was burlesquing Bartok or the people who listen to Bartok and react so absurdly, and I strongly suspect that half the dancers didn't know what they were up to either. To this day I have been unable to fathom the identity of any of the characters not plainly named in the programme, and I have heard John Gilpin's part explained variously as programme-seller, conductor or virtuoso.

It is the old trouble of *untheatrical* satire or symbolism. It is all very well to load your ballet with symbols or to make lots of very funny jokes for the benefit of the initiated few, but this is only permissible, in a public theatre, if the ballet has an intrinsic stage-worthiness that permits a general audience to watch it without feeling "left out". To draw two morals from Rambert's own repertoire:—When the Duck first appears in *Peter and the Wolf*, she makes the same preening movement with her head that Odette does in Act II of *Lac des Cygnes*; if you know your Swan Queen, you will smile at the happy touch, if you don't, it is just a charming movement suggesting a water bird. Again, Walton's music for *Façade*, brimful of quotations, is excellent fun even if you can't spot all the sources.

It is only fair to say that after its first performance *Concerto Burlesco* was speeded up and revised and did achieve some slight contact between stage and audience, although it is still without any backbone of choreographic construction, and shows little regard for the delineation of different characters by suitably contrasted movements. There is no reason why the subject, treated less esoterically, should not make a good ballet; but it will need entirely re-working.

(*Continued from page* 13)

these respects she has recently shown a very great advancement. Robert Helpmann supported her well, although, doubtless owing to his recent severe illness, he was unable to cope with the third act solo.

Among other soloists one would mention the fine elevation of Gillian Lynne and the vivacious beauty of Prokhorova's Czardas.

The major horror of the production is the appearance of the Prince's friends, who deserve every word of abuse ever hurled at English male dancing and will earn many more. For these parts only two qualifications are required: good bearing, and the ability to walk on the stage—of which the present bunch possesses neither. The selection of experienced dancers for these roles would immensely improve the first and second acts of the ballet.

Standards of performances of other ballets during the season were erratic. *Les Patineurs* is on the downgrade again: following Brian Shaw's departure, there is no adequate understudy for Turner and, in fact, alternative casts for this ballet have always presented a problem. The *corps de ballet*, composed largely of newcomers, started the season poorly but later improved. Among the principals, Margot Fonteyn has been dancing magnificently, while Robert Helpmann has returned to the company after illness and resumed the role of Albrecht. Beryl Grey, looking her best on the large stage, has danced very beautifully, and one salutes her regard for the original choreography of her roles, which she never distorts by super-imposing individual mannerisms. She is at her best, however, in parts not requiring great development of character, e.g. Chiarina, the Prayer solo in *Coppélia*, and *Les Sylphides*. In *Symphonic Variations*, a fifty per cent. new cast has remained completely faithful to the requirements of the ballet.

Photograph by Edward Mandinian

I went to mr and mrs Baur
at the shop yesterday I was looking
and then the figures on the door)
told felicity the choce me a boo
I wanted to be a dances I told him
he said it was a ballet him
and then I told him I was very good dan
going to wear lake the ballet
the afternoon and then I came out and
went in a taxi to the ballet it was ver
nice and very easy to follow the story
and then I meet a few of the dancers whe
the show was over.) I meet Miss
Margot fontayn — and miss betty gray
I injoyed my self yesterday very much.
Miss de valois tried me for the balle
She made me point my toe and stand
on one leg and put one at the back
of me. after the show she told
me to go back stage and she would.
see practicing.) fet.) I saw a young frenchman
I saw a young girl she said she
was 16) and she was practising to.)
the lady examind my legs and she said
I would do.) I was then intrgused to
mr bobbie helpmen and he told me neve
to tack up balle dancing it was
to hard, he was practising to.)
he was puting his leg in and out
backwards and forwards and up and down

yolande

BALLET AND THE RADIO

By KATHRINE SORLEY WALKER

BALLET is so complete a link between varied art forms that it is not surprising that the more modern ones of film, radio and television have spent a certain amount of time wondering in what way they can treat dancing. To the cinema and television cameras, the problem, although not yet solved, has not appeared an inordinately difficult one—at least theirs is also a visual art, and as such can portray dance and mime in a fairly orthodox manner; but the radio has no medium to offer but sound, and sound alone seems capable only of tantalising and distracting the lover of ballet with musical echoes and memories, and presenting a lamentably incomplete picture to the newcomer.

Every now and then the B.B.C. has felt the urge to present ballet in their own way. Their successes with plays, operas, films and features have been so remarkable—one recalls at random their broadcasts of *Peter Grimes* and *The Way to the Stars*—that they are hardly to be blamed for attempting to translate ballet; but this is more difficult, for where spoken or sung words and transmitted music can carry much of the magic of play or opera, and become, with the help of the listener's imagination, almost complete, the essential fascination of movement and expression cannot penetrate.

If we consider the various tactics they have used to date, we find that the obvious realm of ballet music has been faithfully explored—sometimes with a rather unimaginative although necessary round of Delibes, Gounod, the Polovtsian Dances, the Nutcracker Suite, or Offenbach, at others suddenly surprising us with Vaughan Williams, Bliss, Lambert, Falla or Stravinsky. Much that either can or could be played does not necessarily come under the heading of ballet music and is not advertised as such. A Liszt piano recital may hold many moments of a never-mentioned *Apparitions*, or a Purcell of the Wells' *Comus*; Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony is not generally identified with *Les Presages* nor Brahms' Fourth with *Choreartium*. Music, however, is only one part of a complex whole, and these are in the nature of involuntary references to ballet.

The B.B.C. have, however, in increasing ratio, come to the art intentionally and attempted to do it justice. There have been a number of single talks in both Home and Overseas Services, including commentaries given by Arnold Haskell, Harold Hobson or A. V. Coton, and interviews or talks by Ninette de Valois, Marie Rambert, Margot Fonteyn and Robert Helpmann, as well as lesser-known artists. Then, in 1941, we heard an ambitious and not too successful history of a ballet in the making, with the aid of the Sadler's Wells Company and the presentation of *Orpheus and Eurydice*. Although an excellent idea, it was not put over too well, stressing as it did a flippancy and artificiality with which the public has already over-endowed the ballet, instead of being a valuable study of how a work is mounted by an artistically impeccable company. A fourth approach has been by series devoted to reminiscence and music, covering such artists as Karsavina, Pavlova or Genée, usually charming from the point of view of the listener who has additional knowledge, but difficult to follow for the newcomer. Two interesting new ideas have been tried more recently. In 1944 interviews with de Valois and Helpmann in the European Service marked the production of *Miracle in the Gorbals*; and Alec Robertson gave a fine descriptive talk on this ballet to precede the playing of the concert suite in the Home Service.

These then are the ways in which radio in this country has used ballet; but surely it would be equally sensible to invert the procedure. Ballet has in turn assimilated for her use the arts of music, costume and scene designing, acting, literature, even sung and spoken poetry. It is then probable that she can, in her own way, exploit the film, television and radio, and the first two of these are being continually attempted.

The radio audience, however, is as yet considerably larger than that for television. It is also larger than that for ballet, even at its present peak of popularity, and is located mostly outside London. It is in the greatest part ignorant of the art, either never having seen any serious ballet, or perhaps only recently having been introduced to it by the provincial tours of the companies. In most cases it knows little or nothing of the history of the art, apart from the legend of Pavlova, and the recurrent references to Nijinsky in the popular press, and probably fails to realise at all the amount of mental and physical work involved in even one small production. Therefore the personalities of the ballet world must be presented as serious exponents of an international and historical art. We want more talks first of all, if possible as fascinating as the autobiographies of Karsavina and Schwezoff, as widely interesting as Haskell's books, as instructive as Beaumont's, and as balanced as de Valois' *Invitation to the Ballet*. These should lead eventually to discussions of the kind that are at present devoted to plays or painting. We want programmes of music, certainly, but for the sake of clarity let them be in some chronological order. Let the history of ballet unroll itself with simplicity. It is impossible for a newcomer to grasp the continuity of the story when the teller jumps

from *Casse Noisette* to *Petrouchka*, from *Façade* to *Coppelia*, naming personalities and productions in a glorious jumble. It would be a tremendous service to audiences all over the country if an interesting and uncomplicated story could be told, which gave important facts but did not try to cram into half an hour the full picture that has taken centuries of time and hundreds of individuals to paint. The rudiments of ballet have to be taught before the intricacies are reached, and they must be made simple, unbiassed, and compelling. Radio, in conjunction with tours such as are at present being undertaken, can admirably present this clear view, and become an ally and guide to the dance.

A False Prophecy (continued from page 12)
in the air or stood on his head is not going to call 'Police!' out of his grave. There never was and never can be 'theft' in gesture''. The thus disequilibrated Balance, evidently fearing to lift so weighty a weapon as the bludgeon, contented himself by merely cocking a snook. ''Mr. George Calderon is an Englishman; hence his enthusiasm for the Russian-Tartar-French dancers who have invaded London lately . . . ''.

Lest there should remain any doubt as to how much of this amazing tirade was inspired from a ''higher level'', it may be mentioned that in some Editorial Notes which appear on the final page of the quoted issue is printed a paragraph gleefully announcing that over three hundred pounds per week had been lost during the first appearance of Diaghilev's artists in London. ''The visit of the Russian Ballet to Covent Garden has proved a grand failure'' is the verdict of the man who, in the interview referred to at the beginning of this article, is quoted as being somewhat indifferent to the material aspect of such matters.

His final word on the subject shows that he remained unrepentant, for *The Mask* of July, 1912, expresses astonishment that the Russian Ballet ''was ever let into London at all''. It would be interesting to know what was the reaction of Gordon Craig to the opinion of his kinswoman, Ellen Terry, who in the Introductory to her book, *The Russian Ballet* (1913), describes Diaghilev's Company as having become ''an international possession''. If the fashion in Russian ballet should age elsewhere, she adds, ''I feel sure it will not in England''. Those who have a flair for searching the files of newspapers will find some of the early Fleet Street judgments on the Russians a little startling. There was, for instance, the distinguished critic who, after seeing *Le Sacre de Printemps* in 1914, advised Nijinsky to scrap the composer of *Petrouchka* and to seek someone more competent. But never in the history of criticism can there have been uttered such a ''howler'' as that perpetrated by *The Mask* in pulling faces at one of the most impressive phenomena in the annals of the Arts.

''The Fairy Queen'' (continued from page 14)
in particular. As it is there is a complete lack of authenticity in the general entries throughout the opera; the dances of the fairies, etc., might easily be returned to *The Wise Virgins*, *Horoscope* and *The Quest* with few the wiser. Moreover, there is an excess of pointe-work which is completely out of period—Fokine, I think, would have avoided such a mistake.

Disregarding these personal grudges, I must pay tribute to the Echo Dance with its gradual diminution of gesture, a little gem of simple restraint, artistry and a subtle use of perspective. Praise also to the adage (Ashton at his height of invention), danced beautifully by Fonteyn and Somes—their entry may be reminiscent of a similar lift in *The Wanderer*, but its ''cleverness'' is more discreet. Finally, praise to the movements devised for the followers of night; especially the winged grouping with its curious effect of foreshortened bodies and gently breathing arms. One criticism here—why, in the midst of so much plenty must the poor girls go without their hosiery allowance? The effect of white flesh against midnight blue is displeasing.

As a finale the transformation—''A Chinese Garden'' —with its paucity of invention and overdone ''chinoiserie'', is an anti-climax after the satisfying final tableaux of ''The Masque of the Seasons''. Surely if the original ending could not be adhered to it would be better to stage the actual ''Masque of Hymen''?

Space forbids fair mention of the remainder of the production. The settings, as I have written already, share the honours with the music. The original stage directions mention swans swimming through arches to turn into fairies and dance; numbers of strange birds flying in the air; peacock spreading their tails to fill the middle of the theatre. Mr. Michael Ayrton has not been so ambitious, but his return to Inigo Jones is full of magnificent curiosities (did he, I wonder, stop with Salvador Dali on the way?).

Miss Margaret Rawlings does all that can be done with Titania; she is both beautiful to watch and to hear. I wish I could say the same of the singers. The chorus is excellent, but, after hearing the remarkable performances of Purcell at Morley College recently, I found myself watching for the entries of the soloists with fear and trembling.

Mr. Robert Helpmann spares us any operatic efforts. He is a magnificent Oberon—too magnificent perhaps in the degree of malevolent intensity which he lends to the part. During his wooing of Titania I felt certain he would burst at any moment into: ''Why are you vext, Lady? Why do you frown?''.

In all, *The Fairy Queen* is an interesting experience—if it is not repeated too often. After Aurora, Titania is the second regal beauty to be wakened within the last twelve months at Covent Garden. Since she has been asleep on and off for the past two hundred and fifty years, it is, perhaps, understandable why she is still a trifle heavy with slumber.

See inside back cover for descriptions

NEWS FROM NEW YORK

By GRACE ROBERT

THE 1946 autumn season of ballet in New York was probably the most extensive in recent American theatrical history. Unfortunately, it was a gourmand's feast with little solid fare for the discriminating ballet lover.

The Original Ballet Russe opened at the Metropolitan with all the fanfare and chi-chi that attends any Metropolitan première. It is an unfortunate fact that ballet openings at the Metropolitan attract a parade of curious characters, both male and female, who probably hibernate in cracks in the woodwork for the rest of the year, as they are never visible on other occasions. From the balletic point of view, there was little to attract a serious audience. The Original Ballet Russe, which has toured Latin-America for several years without any competition, apparently cherished the idea that no extra effort need be made for crude and gullible Americans. They offered a programme of tired ballets, untidily produced, that would have done little credit to a fly-by-night outfit, and was entirely unworthy of a group that prides itself on being the inheritor of the Diaghilev tradition. The placid *Prince Igors* and prim *Shéhérazades* were first-rate arguments for the decent burial of a ballet æsthetic, valid in its day but long since outdated. Until new Fokines, Nijinskys, and Karsavinas appear, let there be no resurrection.

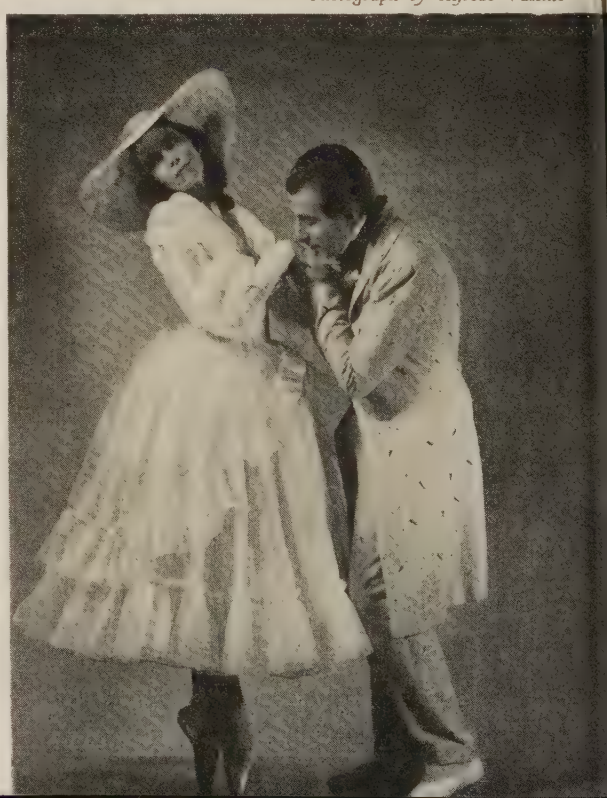
There is equally little that one can find to say in praise of their new productions, of which *Camille* and *Cain and Abel* were noticed in the November issue of *Ballet Today*. *Yara*, with a musical score by Mignone and a décor by Portinari, two of Brazil's outstanding artists, was choreographed in typical old-fashioned *ballet russe* style by Vania Psota. It was a *mélange* of mythology, peasant rollickings, scenes of suffering and distress, all in a state of pointless confusion, although work had been going forward on the production for all of two years.

The Original Ballet Russe also presented revivals of *Paganini*, *Le Fils Prodigue*, *Symphonie Fantastique*, and other well-known ballets, sadly disillusioning to those of the audience who had seen them before, and puzzling to those newcomers who had heard or read accounts of previous productions. Obviously, the far-famed Grigoriev memory has ceased to function, for anyone who had seen these ballets could spot unfortunate deviations from the original choreography.

Fortunately for those ballet lovers who prefer their ballet in the *ambiente* of the Metropolitan, Mr. Hurok had taken steps to bolster the Original Ballet Russe with several dancers of outstanding ability: Alicia Markova, Anton Dolin, Rosella Hightower, André Eglevsky, Yura Skibine, and a number of soloists formerly of Ballet Theatre. At first they were used merely to pad out programs, performing various *pas de deux* from the classical repertoire. Later, in the face of unmistakably hostile criticism, it was necessary to offer the public works that were less insulting to the intelligence than dreary revivals featuring heavy-footed ballerinas and inept new ballets. Dolin revived *Giselle* with the incomparable Markova, supported by a *corps de ballet* which it was difficult to identify as the same group that had given such deplorably ragged exhibitions in *Swan Lake* and *Les Sylphides*, thereby demonstrating that the general lack of organisation and atmosphere of hysteria in which the interminable rehearsals of the Original Ballet Russe were conducted were less effective than efficiency and discipline. In less than two weeks and with a minimum of rehearsal time, Dolin produced a more than creditable *Giselle*.

On the credit side also, were the revivals of *Sebastian* and *Constantia*, formerly in the repertoire of the defunct Ballet International. *Sebastian*, unmistakably both a popular and artistic success, is a story of black magic

ALICIA MARKOVA AND ANTON DOLIN IN "CAMILLE"
Photograph by Alfredo Valente



ograph by George Karger-Pix

NORA KAYE AND JEROME ROBBINS IN "FACSIMILE"

Photograph by Dwight Godwin-Windmann

IGOR YOUSKEVITCH, ALICIA ALONSO, NORA KAYE AND BARBARA FALLIS IN "APOLLO"

and frustrated malevolence, surrounded by a fantastic swirl of Venetian pageantry. It boasts an original score by Gian-Carlo Menotti, who is also the author of the plot, a colourful décor by Milema, and choreography by Edward Caton. It had not met with the appreciation it deserved at its original presentation, due to miscasting in two of the principal roles. The ballet gained new lustre with the presence of Rosella Hightower, Yura Skibine, and Frank Moncion, of the original cast, who had been engaged as guest artist. Hightower's many admirers, who with some reason regard her as America's outstanding classical ballerina of the younger generation, were amazed at the hitherto unsuspected dramatic ability she displayed in a role of wide emotional range.

Constantia, a symphonic ballet with choreography by William Dollar to the Chopin *Concerto in F*, is a true apotheosis of the dance. There is no plot, even by implication, the dancers moving in charming patterns that are as abstract as those of *Les Sylphides*. Hightower, Eglevsky, and Yvonne Patterson were given ample opportunity to display their elevation and command of academic technique in a manner that gave no evidence of pedantry on the part of the choreographer. Dollar has obviously been influenced by Balanchine, but he is one disciple who has struck out a line for himself, while keeping in mind his master's musicality and rhythmic exactness. *Constantia*, with its serenity and simplicity, and, above all, its true balletic quality, was a success with both critics and audience, even winning a grudging approval from the entrenched Russians back of the scenes.

The Mute Wife, with choreography by Antonia Cobos to music by Paganini, is a slight, witty work of brief duration. Based on the Anatole France story, the choreographer, who also danced the title role, made ingenious use of castanets to indicate the chattering of the lady to whom speech was restored.

Concurrently with the Metropolitan season, Ballet Theatre was performing at the Broadway—a most unsuitable theatre, with bad sight lines, poor acoustics, and a small stage. The company, young, personable, and competent, offered in addition to their well-known repertoire three new works and a revival.

Giselle, with a spectacular décor by Eugéne Berman, seemed cramped by the inadequate stage. Alicia Alonso and Igor Youskevitch gave performances that could only be called tentative. Nora Kaye made an impressively dramatic Myrtha, and the *corps de ballet* performed with beautiful precision, but somehow the ballet, as a whole, failed to come off. The introduction of some "business" from the 1841 production (at the end Albrecht seized Giselle and placed her on a bank of flowers, into which she disappeared) puzzled everybody, including the critics, who should have known better.

The most eagerly awaited new work of the season was *Facsimile*, a collaboration by a trio of artists—Jerome Robbins, Leonard Bernstein and Oliver Smith—

(*Continued on page* 28)

GALINA ULANOVA—SOVIET BALLERINA

By ELENA ROSLAVLEVA

GALINA ULANOVA first appeared in *Chopiniana* (*Les Sylphides*) at the graduation concert, 1928. Since then the realm of *Ballet Blanc* has become her element. But it was only some years later that she became the talk of all ballet goers. I shall never forget her first appearance in Moscow in the new ballet *The Fountain of Bakchiserai*. She floated into the Crimean Khan's motley seraglio as a white bird perched in inimitably graceful pose high in the air on the shoulders of four janissaries.

This is the secret of Ulanova's charm—she has not even started dancing, but her first pose, her initial movement, catches the breath of each spectator.

It sounds almost like a paradox, but she dances when in the last scene of Prokofiev's ballet Romeo lovingly raises Juliet's lifeless body on his outstretched arms. She seems lifeless but not dead.

It should not be understood by all this that Ulanova is a static dancer. She has tamed ballet technique to such an extent it is hardly noticeable. She needs it merely as an obedient servant. Her art is of much higher and deeper nature. Russian connoisseurs say of her that above all she has mastered a rare kind of technique—the technique of lyrical dance.

Prokofiev provided Juliet with only three or four real dance variations. But Ulanova dances the whole ballet.

One of the most beautiful scenes is when Ulanova's Juliet glides *sur les pointes* to the crucifix in Father Lawrence's cell and slowly takes the position *en arabesque*, gradually bending to the floor. There is a whole tale in that famous *demi-arabesque* of Ulanova's which in itself is a story.

Ulanova is endowed with almost everything a ballerina needs. But she has by nature a short step, and in order to make it appear longer she keeps one leg extended as far from the other as possible and arches her back till she attains a beautiful curve, forming a classical line in one with *arabesque* and slightly bent neck. That is another defect which is made to serve art. Ulanova is inclined to keep her neck bent as if always looking downwards. Her shoulders are slightly raised. This is a remnant of pronounced inferiority complex in her childhood. But the slightly rounded neck forms a perfect line running from the gracefully

"BAKCHISERAI FOUNTAIN"

ULANOVA'S ARABESQUE

raised leg to the head. She does not possess a swan's neck, but her Odette from *Swan Lake* is just as Tchaikovsky visioned her, and could there be higher praise?

I said above, "Ulanova's Juliet". I wanted to emphasise that Ulanova lends her own individual personality to every part. Her Juliet might not be an authentic young woman of the Renaissance, but, after all, Shakespeare copied his heroine from Elizabethan maidens. Ulanova's Juliet is a glorious all-conquering spiritual love.

Ulanova has danced all the known parts in all the ballets from *The Sleeping Princess* to *Casse Noisette* and *Raymonda*. But she is naturally known by those parts which have best expressed her personality. It so happened that she became famous after *The Fountain of Bakhchiserai*, but *Giselle* is her favourite ballet, because on the one hand it best of all expresses her favourite theme of eternal, self-forgetting love which is stronger than death, and on the other its choreography is perfectly harmonious with the music and story, and she dislikes when any conflict of the kind occurs in the ballet she is dancing.

For Soviet spectators the part of *Giselle* is intangibly bound with Ulanova's interpretation. Giselle's madness as acted by Ulanova is not pathological, it is psychological, and there is a big difference in this approach. She suffers from broken illusions rather than a broken heart. Another very important feature of Ulanova's is that she dislikes mime and very seldom uses it—she expresses everything by movement, and is capable of conveying a thousand *nuances* through a dance.

It is also necessary to know for a proper understanding of Ulanova's art that there is nothing Chekhovian about her. She dances life itself, but in its better, higher planes. She is very Russian in her art. When her Juliet or Giselle die that makes you feel how beautiful and pure is the life around you. This is Ulanova's favourite theme. But she sometimes feels wistful for a sparkling active role, full of daring and battle. I am sure she could do it. She is not altogether what she dances in *Giselle*. She is a good sportswoman, and instead of going to a fashionable resort spent last summer in the woods of the Karelian Isthmus rowing barefoot in the lake. She hates diplomatic receptions and avoids as many as she can, leaving her man-of-the-world husband, Yuri Zavadsky—an excellent theatre director—to represent the family.

She told me, with a twinkle in her eye, that she was rather amused to read in Iris Morley's book *Soviet Ballet*, which she admired as a whole, that she is something of the soft lady and is about to expire of tuberculosis.

I visited her shortly before writing this article, having seen her dancing Giselle the night before. She

AMAMI

the Lovely Hair Shampoo

Highlight your hair with a regular Amami Shampoo! If you are dark Amami No. 1 will make it glow with lovely mysterious colours. If fair, Amami No. 5 will make it shine like gold. Ask today for your own Amami Shampoo! Amami No. 1 for Brunettes. Amami No. 5 for Blondes. **4d.** each, inclusive of Purchase Tax.

a perfect 'set'

A few drops of quick-drying, non-oily, non-sticky, Amami Wave Set will give you lovely waves and perfect curls. Two kinds: AMAMI GREEN WAVE SET and AMAMI SPIRITOUS. 1/2 per bottle inclusive of Purchase Tax.

You only need a little AMAMI Wave Set

Friday Night is AMAMI night

met me in her small well-furnished flat in the most simple and unaffected manner. There was no lipstick, no trace of face powder on her face, and she wore a cosy navy-blue knitted dress. The simplicity itself was not acted, not carefully thought out—it was genuinely natural.

We talked about the pending Moscow production *Romeo and Juliet*. She said it is quite exciting because she has to revise her own work of a few years ago. "I have to look everything over. I agree with some of the things I did, but quite a few will be danced in a new way. The years between the first and present production certainly left their imprint. Moreover, in Moscow I am having an entirely new set of partners in the whole ballet, and this also obliges me to co-ordinate my part with the rest of the dancers. I am very fond of *Giselle*, but it has a lot of old-type mime with its conventional ballet gestures. After *The Fountain of Bakhchiserai*, *Romeo and Juliet* is the second serious ballet. Together with the choreographer, Leonid Lavrovsky, we have worked hard to keep the pantomine within the dance. It is natural that the theme of *Romeo and Juliet* is so tense that one cannot dance it with the means of ordinary ballet *pas de deux*. We still use the medium of the classical dance in this ballet, but it has acquired an entirely new nature".

I asked her how she became a dancer. "It was quite simple", said she; "my father and mother were dancers. In the early twenties, when I was a child of eight, they placed me in Leningrad Ballet School because it had a dormitory and they often appeared in late concerts and were unable to look after me. I was taken on a year's probation and was not considered a promising pupil at all. I was terribly shy, but rather graceful. Soon my mother, Maria Romanova, became the instructor of the ballet school, and she taught me until the very last grade when Agrippina Vaganova took over the senior class. Thus I owe much of my training to my mother. When I graduated with a group of young dancers, such as Vyacheslava Dudinskaya, we were destined to replace the generation of older ballerinas who were just leaving the stage. We were very green and inexperienced, and it makes me smile when I think of my first efforts. My first part was Bluebird. Soon I was given the part of Odette. I knew only one thing—in some of the scenes I had got to be a bird and in others a girl. Gradually I found more *nuances*, and I felt the urge to convey a mood and impression brought about by music and the subject of the ballet. Yet I danced unconsciously. Now my mind often burdens me, but in the preliminary work it helps a lot".

So this was Ulanova. She was the subject of a Master of Arts thesis the other day, "The Problems of Ballet and the Art of Galina Ulanova", and many a book will yet be written analysing her subtle art.

News from New York (*Continued from page 25*)

from whom New Yorkers had learned to expect much. It was a sad disappointment to those who cherished the memory of *Fancy Free*, a first-rate piece of Americana. *Facsimile* deals with the trivial emotions of three shallow, dreary habitués of a beach resort. They are quite as boring as their prototypes in real life. It enjoyed a certain *succès de scandale* with the more neurotic types in the audience, who derived a *frisson* from the tangled and indiscriminate embraces of the three dancers—Nora Kaye, Jerome Robbins and John Kriza. I can only consider it a waste of everybody's time, not excluding the spectators'.

Les Patineurs, familiar to English audiences, delighted New York, in spite of an obtrusive décor and unsuitable costumes by Cecil Beaton.

The third new work, Keith Lester's *Pas de Quatre*, did not compare favourably with the Dolin version.

In spite of the quantity of ballet available to New York ballet lovers during the past season, there is little that can be identified as artistic success, and the feud that is being waged by the various ballet managements will, unless speedily resolved, result in the death of interest in ballet in New York. Another season like the one just past will be disastrous.

Balletomane's Bookshelf

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY. A Photographic Record by Edward Mandinian. The Story of the Ballet by Cyril W. Beaumont. (C. W. Beaumont. 25s. net.)

This is the book for all admirers of the production first presented by the Sadler's Wells Ballet Company at Covent Garden last year. In these forty beautiful and excellently selected plates Mandinian gives the ballet from opening to apotheosis in a complete sequence, and includes typical poses of each of the dancers of the different variations and divertissements. Mr. Beaumont's text relates the story of this version, though, unless my own memory is at fault, there are some minor differences between his account and the ballet as performed by this company; and I do not think the music for the Lilac Fairy's solo can truthfully be said to resemble "the tinkle of little bells, and liquid melody of a running brook"—it is rather a grand, sweeping tune. However, it is for the photographs that ballet lovers will want this book.

BALLET IMPROMPTU. By Kay Ambrose. (Golden Galley Press Ltd., 25s. net.)

Everyone who admires Kay Ambrose's sketches of the ballet and ballet personages will like her new book which is a *mélange* of text, sketches, lithographs and photographs both action and posed. The lithographs comprise the least successful portion of the book and hardly seem worth the infinite trouble they must have

caused. In both illustrations and text Miss Ambrose makes it a little too clear as to which dancers are best known to her personally and her portrait sketches rarely achieve a likeness, but I should like her to know I am at her shoulder in her stand against the "No applause for *Les Sylphides*" cult. She also has some pertinent things to say about the various types of ballet hangers-on whom she classifies with point and accuracy.

MIRACLE IN THE GORBALS. By Arnold Haskell. (Albyn Press, 8s. 6d. net.)

Mr. Haskell uses this ballet as the jumping-off place for an analysis of Robert Helpmann's work as choreographer in the ballet theatre, which he places under the sub-heading "Dance-drama"—a classification with which few will quarrel. Mr. Haskell is careful to make the point that such works have value only so long as they are counterbalanced by others where the emphasis is on the dance rather than the drama. He also administers a timely rebuke to those who insist on seeing in Helpmann a great social reformer or Bernard Shaw of Ballet. Says Haskell: "Helpmann succeeds because he is a man of the theatre and not because he has the slightest interest in the slums and their moral effects". Helpmann is, beyond any doubt, one of the outstanding figures of the contemporary theatre, and he does not need any of the labels that some of his over-eager admirers are constantly attempting to affix to him. I must confess to remaining unconvinced by Mr. Haskell's reasonings as to why the *locale* had to be the Gorbals and not any other slum area; but certainly no other title would have sounded half so effective. "Gorbals" is a name which Dickens would have loved to have invented. The book is admirably illustrated with photographs of the ballet mostly by Edward Mandinian (two action pictures are by John T. Knight), and there is also a reproduction of a portrait-bust which for one startled moment I took to be of Rassine. Perhaps the nicest thing in the book is a page from Helpmann's notes on the ballet, which shows him to be an endearingly bad speller.

P.W.M.

FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CLASSIC DANCE (Russian Ballet Technique). By Agrippina Vaganova. Translated and Edited by Anatole Chujoy. (Kamin Publishers, New York, $3.50.)

Though I appreciate the difficulties of translating a textbook, I feel that too literal a translation such as this is often the cause and not a proof against misunderstanding. There are some ambiguous sentences which, I feel sure, are the result of too literal a translation, but, in spite of this, Anatole Chujoy has given us a very interesting textbook, which we may otherwise not have had the pleasure of seeing.

As far as I can gather, Agrippina Vaganova is a contemporary of the world-famous ballerina, Madame Anna Pavlova, but, as she did not come out of Russia,

THIS MEMBER OF THE WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF HEALTH AND BEAUTY WRITES:

The enclosed photograph shows how white and sparkling my teeth look after always using Eucryl

EUCRYL TOOTH POWDER

IN TINS 9d. & 1/3

THE WHITE POWDER FOR WHITE TEETH

we know very little of her over here. From all accounts I have read of her (unfortunately marred by the usual Soviet propaganda phraseology), it appears that she is the leading teacher of the present-day Russian ballerinas, Semyonova featuring prominently amongst her pupils. From much that I have seen on film, and from dancers who have come out of Russia recently, I feel that they lack the true feeling for classical style, their classical work being too boisterous and rough, and their line too acrobatic. But, on reading this little textbook by Agrippina Vaganova, I find the writer seems to have no love for such excesses. In fact, this treatise contains (for those who know how to read it) some very sound hints on good style.

The author's introduction, however, contains some wordy nonsense which, I feel sure, would never have come to the mind of a practising artist, but for the present fashion of prepounding elaborate theories and high-sounding slogans, which successfully masquerade as practical truths, but are in reality nothing but an abuse of words. I quote one instance:—

"I could not decide whether to use the precise anatomical and bio-mechanical terminology in defining the parts of the body, legs and arms . . . ".

Luckily, she gives up this piece of nonsense, and I was very pleased to find that the little book, once it got started on its practical matter, was simple in its explanation and contains an abundance of charming sketches which considerably simplify the reading of the text. Though I am a ballet dancer by profession, it was the presence of so many clear little sketches which encouraged me to read the text. Most of the material in the book will be familiar to anyone who has worked in a Russian school. Vaganova uses the numbering of corners of the room and walls to place her dancers, but she does not use it in the same way as it is used in Maestro Cecchetti's method, and it is not clear whether she has only adopted this plan for the purpose of making more clear her description or whether she uses it practically in class.

She also describes as an Italian *port de bras*, much used in the Russian schools, the second *port de bras* of the Cecchetti method, but it is slightly different in some details of line. Vaganova calls the 5th position *en avant* and the 5th position *en bas* of the arms (Cecchetti method) respectively the 1st position and the preparatory position. This is unlike any nomenclature with which I am familiar.

She says of point work:—

"The Italian technique has such unquestionable advantages that I subscribe to it without reservations. Cecchetti taught to rise on the points with a little jump . . . ".

I heartily agree with her here. On the whole she is favourably disposed towards the Italian school, but not the French, though, of course, she thinks the Russians have the last word to say. MARY SKEAPING.

Beauty
is not looks alone

BEAUTY is not merely a question of perfected make-up or the latest, most lovable hair-style. These are but finishing touches. True loveliness springs from a deeper source—from confidence, from assurance, from the knowledge of *freedom*. And these are the benefits which Tampax brings. Tampax, perfected sanitary protection worn internally, brings you the priceless gift of peace of mind *at all times* . . . for Tampax is invisible, is safer, surer, more hygienic. No matter the date, loveliness can never be clouded by doubt or worry: with Tampax, you can wear what you like and do what you like.

TAMPAX
Internal Sanitary Protection
TAMPAX LTD., BELVUE ROAD, NORTHOLT, MIDDLESEX

For all Lovers of Ballet . . .

"JEWELS FROM THE BALLET"

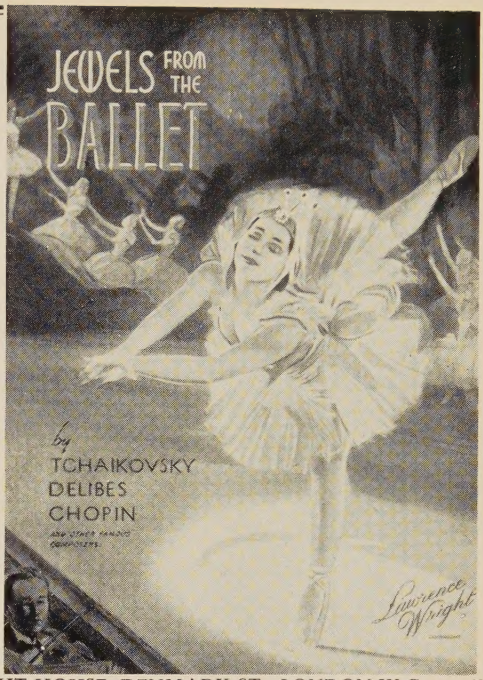
Containing Music from the following Famous Ballets:

COPPELIA
TALES OF HOFFMANN
DANCE OF THE HOURS
CASSE-NOISETTE
SPECTRE DE LA ROSE
DIE FLEDERMAUS
LES SYLPHIDES
SYLVIA
SLEEPING BEAUTY
ROSAMUNDE
EUGENE ONEGIN
SWAN LAKE
ORPHEUS IN THE UNDERWORLD

Including many photographs of the greatest ballet artistes and an introduction by the famous Ballet Dancer and Choreographer:

ROBERT HELPMANN

PIANO ALBUM 7/6
(8/1 *Post Free*)

VIOLIN PART 2/6
(2/9 *Post Free*)

LAWRENCE WRIGHT MUSIC CO. LTD., WRIGHT HOUSE, DENMARK ST., LONDON W.C.2
Telephone: TEM. 2141

"My dear, talking of ballon . . ."

We are pleased to announce that there will be at least five issues of

BALLET TODAY

during 1947
and if paper restrictions are relaxed there will be more.

★

The price will be 2/- per copy.
No. 5 will be out at the end of March.

The two pictures on page 23 are action photographs by Roger Wood taken during a performance of *A Ballet in the Ballet*. The top picture shows Leonide Massine in *Gaieté Parisienne*. The lower picture shows Ivan Demidoff as the Blackamoor, Irina Baronova as the Doll, and Leonide Massine in the title role of *Petrouchka*.

THE MODERN WAY TO LOVELINESS

You'd take more care of your looks—if only you had time. If you've ever found yourself saying this, NUMBER 7 *beauty preparations were designed for you. They aim to give the best results with the minimum of fuss. All the essentials are there, without time-wasting frills. And of course they are backed by Boots 50 years' experience of beauty preparations, with a guarantee of absolute purity.*

The Boots Chemists

Printed by Bemrose & Sons Ltd., Derby, and Published by Newman Wolsey Ltd., 244 High Holborn, London W.C.1. Telephone: Chancery 8471